

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks(SDGFP) Federal Assistance Project

*Proposed Construction of the Whetstone Shotgun Trap Range, Milbank,
Grant County, South Dakota*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has prepared this document in accordance with the procedures for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as it applies to the Federal Aid in Fish and Wildlife Restoration Acts (64 Stat. 430; 16 U.S.C. Sec. 777 et. seq. and 50 State 916; 16 U.S.C. Sec. 669 et. seq.).

A final environmental assessment entitled “Whetstone Sportsman and Conservation Club Trap Range Development, Milbank, South Dakota” was prepared in compliance with the NEPA to assist in agency decision-making in determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of the proposed action is to develop and construct a public outdoor shooting facility to provide safe and responsible public recreation opportunities and to enhance hunter education efforts for the Milbank area.

Three alternatives were evaluated:

No Action - This alternative is to do nothing and continue to use the existing trap range. Safety needs and issues would not be resolved with continued residential development occurring around the range. The development that is occurring adjacent to the current range would eventually lead to stopping the operation of the range. The existing trap house would no longer be used due to encroachment by housing. The shooting range and the adjacent golf course cannot be used at the same time due to safety issues resulting in inconvenience to users of both facilities.

Alternative 1 - Proposed Action - The Proposed Action is to move the shooting range to a new six acre site that is currently used for agricultural purposes. The Proposed Action will include the construction and excavation of two trap houses, construction of walkways, electrical trenching, installation of outdoor light poles and installation of a culvert for the building approach. An A-Frame utility/storage shed will be constructed upon a floating concrete slab. The access road to the proposed range site is currently a trail and will be improved by adding a gravel surface.

Alternative 2 – This alternative would change the direction of firing line at the current trap range from the east direction to the southeast direction. The construction involved would be to remove the current trap houses and walkways, and construct new trap houses and walkways oriented toward the southeast direction. This would only be a temporary solution as the area around the trap range continues to be developed with single family homes.

The construction of the Whetstone Trap Range project will not result in any significant adverse effects to floodplains, wetlands, prime or unique farmland; Federally-listed species; or archaeological, cultural, or historical resources.

Consultation and Coordination

The availability of the draft Environmental Assessment was announced in a news release on December 1, 2006, and distributed statewide in South Dakota to all newspaper publishers, congressional delegates, and Bureau of Indian Affairs offices. A notice was also mailed to 14 landowners adjacent to the proposed range site.

The following agencies were involved in the pre-planning efforts for the project: Natural Resource Conservation District, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Center; and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers for the following Tribes: Rosebud Sioux; Cheyenne River Sioux; and the Flandreau Santee Sioux.

The draft Environmental Assessment was also made available online at <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/federalassistance> and <http://www.sdgsd.info/Wildlife/hunting/Safety/WhetstoneProj.htm>.

No comments were received on the draft EA during the public review period.

A news release regarding the availability of the final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact will be published statewide in South Dakota. Also, a notice of availability of these documents will be provided to the interested parties and adjacent landowners.

Conclusion

Based on review of the final Environmental Assessment and evaluation of the effects of the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102 (2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. I also find that all reasonable alternatives were considered in the evaluation of this project and that this project complies with the intent of Executive Order 11988 "Floodplain Management" and Executive Order 11990 "Protection of Wetlands." Consequently, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Signed by Jay Slack Deputy Regional Director

1-12-07

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6

Date

Reference: Final Environmental Assessment for the Whetstone Shotgun Trap Range, Milbank, Grant County, South Dakota, dated December 2006